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No. 2

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMMONS).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 21, 2004.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ROB SIMMONS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, creator of life, author of our inalienable rights, every single human person is to be valued and revered. Some people in life mean more to us than others. In this Nation, the office of Presidency bestows upon a single person an awesome responsibility. The President personifies our loyalty and our strength as a Nation. He is called to unify our diversity and resources for the lasting good of this country and for the betterment of the world community.

Today we pray for George W. Bush, the 43rd President of the United States of America. Bless him, his cabinet, staff advisors, and especially his family. Be his source of wisdom and planning and of understanding the people's needs and courage in difficult times.

May all in the executive branch of government work in cooperation with this Congress to achieve what is best for our Nation at this time. This we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. DELAURO led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

PRESIDENT BUSH LEADS EFFECTIVELY, HONORABLY, AND WITH DISTINCTION

(Mr. FOLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I see there are a few Democrats on the floor today; they are busy preparing their "I hate George Bush" speeches for the day. We finished last night with a message from the President of the United States about the hopeful optimism this country has and the things that we can do together if we only stop bickering and start working towards our common goals.

The war on terrorism is his single focus; and since September 11, our homeland has been safe. Liberating the world has been his hallmark, and today we can claim that Libya is now negotiating with the United States. North Korea is finally talking about putting aside their hatefulness. India and Pakistan are joining together for conversations that are hopeful and helpful for solving the world's problems.

This President has led effectively, honorably, and with distinction.

At the end of the State of the Union speech, the minority leader went on to

describe how reckless, basically, this President has been. I disagree vehemently and strongly. I applaud our President. I applaud the state of the Union. The economy is growing stronger, unemployment is reducing itself and we are finding ourselves in a better place, thanks to his leadership.

God bless this great Nation and, as the chaplain said, God bless our President.

HONORING MICHAEL GALE

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Michael Gale, an exceptional student in my district in West Virginia, and one of my constituents.

Michael was recently awarded one of 12 George Mitchell Scholarships for postgraduate studies at universities in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Michael is the first West Virginia resident ever to receive this prestigious award and will study at the National University of Ireland in Galway.

The Mitchell Scholarship was established by an endowment from the Irish Government in 1998 and is administered by the U.S.-Ireland Alliance. The House has supported funding for the Mitchell Scholarship both in 2003 and 2004. The British Government also provides support for this program.

I offer my congratulations to Michael Gale, an exceptional young West Virginian, and the other 11 winners of the Mitchell Scholarship and wish them all the best in their studies in Ireland.

HONORING THE LIFE OF HAROLD J. "TEX" LEZAR, JUNIOR

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, it is my sad duty this morning to report on the

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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passing of one of the most articulate conservative voices in Texas.

Harold J. "Tex" Lezar, Jr., left us earlier this month, a Texas lawyer who had worked for both the Nixon and Reagan administrations and was a fixture in Texas and national politics.

Born in Dallas, Tex Lezar grew up in Japan, the son of a ship's captain who did reconnaissance work for General MacArthur. He graduated from Yale and was an assistant to columnist William F. Buckley, Jr., before becoming a speech writer for President Nixon. Tex worked on Ronald Reagan's 1980 Presidential campaign before becoming a special counsel to the U.S. Attorney General and later the chief of staff under Attorney General William French Smith.

In June of 1984, Tex Lezar married Ms. Mary Spaeth. He leaves three children: Philip, Beau, and Maverick.

As a Texas Republican, I can say we were blessed to have had him with us as a guide to encourage and direct our political paths. As a friend of him and his family, I am glad I had the chance to know him; and I honor his life here today.

COMMENDING DR. GEORGE MEETZE FOR HIS HISTORIC SERVICE TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week history was made in the South Carolina State Senate when the Reverend George Elias Meetze presented the prayer for opening the Senate First Day of the Second Session of the 115th General Assembly on January 13. This marked the 55th year of service by the enthusiastic Dr. Meetze as chaplain of the Senate. He holds the historic record of being the longest-serving chaplain of a legislative body in the world. Every day, as he leads the Senate in prayer, he establishes a new record of devotion to the people of South Carolina.

Dr. Meetze is a graduate of the University of South Carolina, New York Theological Seminary, and Lutheran Southern Seminary. He is the retired pastor of the Lutheran Church of the Incarnation of Columbia from 1942 to 1974. Dr. Meetze and his late wife, Margarete Allen, have two sons, George Allen Meetze and William Dagnall Meetze.

In every way, Dr. Meetze is a vital participant of the Midlands community, never missing Rotary, promoting the Salvation Army, and serving the American Cancer Society.

I urge my colleagues to commend Dr. George Meetze for his historic service as he begins a new session.

In conclusion, God bless our troops. We will always remember September 11.

HEALTH CARE VOUCHERS FOR THE WORKING UNINSURED

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, last year, Americans on average saw their health care costs increase by 9.3 percent. That is on top of the year before where health care inflation ran at 12 percent. Today, we have 44 million Americans without health insurance and 32 million Americans who work full-time without health care.

In fact, the problem with our health care system today is that many people with health care insurance pay an uninsured premium for those who work, but show up at emergency rooms without health care. Hospital costs are skyrocketing through the roof. We all pay for their health care, and they do not get it.

What ails our health care system is that there is not enough competition. We need competition in pricing of prescription drugs where we have competition, where people can buy drugs in Canada, in Europe. That competition and choice would drive prices down. What we need to do for the uninsured is also create a competitive system.

I have offered and will be offering soon a piece of legislation for a health care voucher for the working uninsured where they will get a voucher equal to the dollar amount of the tax credit the President proposed and buy into a subsidiary of the Federal employees health care plan.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 492) honoring the contributions of Catholic schools.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 492

Whereas America's Catholic schools are internationally acclaimed for their academic excellence, but provide students more than a superior scholastic education;

Whereas Catholic schools ensure a broad, values-added education emphasizing the life-long development of moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in America's young people;

Whereas the total Catholic school student enrollment for the 2003-2004 academic year is 2,600,000 and the student-teacher ratio is 17 to 1;

Whereas Catholic schools teach a diverse group of students;

Whereas more than 26 percent of school children enrolled in Catholic schools are from minority backgrounds, and more than 14 percent are non-Catholics;

Whereas Catholic schools produce students strongly dedicated to their faith, values, families, and communities by providing an intellectually stimulating environment rich in spiritual, character, and moral development;

Whereas in the 1972 pastoral message concerning Catholic education, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops stated: "Education is one of the most important ways by which the Church fulfills its commitment to the dignity of the person and building of community. Community is central to education ministry, both as a necessary condition and an ardently desired goal. The educational efforts of the Church, therefore, must be directed to forming persons-in-community; for the education of the individual Christian is important not only to his solitary destiny, but also the destinies of the many communities in which he lives."; and

Whereas January 25-31, 2004, has been designated as Catholic Schools Week by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, an event celebrating its 30th year: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals of Catholic Schools Week, an event co-sponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and established to recognize the vital contributions of America's thousands of Catholic elementary and secondary schools; and

(2) congratulates Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education, and for the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for this Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 492.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 492, offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER). This resolution honors the contributions of America's Catholic schools, which are dedicated to not only educating their students academically but to developing their moral, intellectual, physical, and social values.

January 25 through the 31 is Catholic Schools Week, an annual tradition jointly sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and it is in its 30th year.